

(Mr. POE. addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ALLEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SNYDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to join my colleagues and the Nation in recognizing May as Asian Pacific American Month, a time to celebrate the numerous contributions that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made to American life.

But first, I would like to recognize and congratulate my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA). As the Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Congressman HONDA has worked tirelessly to highlight the contributions of the Asian Pacific American community.

Congressman HONDA's leadership emphasizes the importance of diversity, cultural education, and awareness of the many beautiful cultures and heritages that are woven into the fabric of our country.

Thank you, Congressman HONDA, for your dedication and your passion.

May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated with community festivals, government-sponsored activities, and educational activities for students. Currently, 15 million Asian Pacific Americans live in the United States.

With more than 25 Asian and Pacific Islander groups with different languages and unique histories, including Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipinos, Indian, Pakistani, Korean, Japanese, and Bangladeshi, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month highlights the diversity that makes up our great Nation.

As an American Jew, I am proud to say that Asians and Jews have a unique and celebrated history of partnership and community. Asian Americans have developed many thriving communities in California and New York City, for example, where there are also a large number of Jewish communities.

Our cultural similarities and major emphasis on family and education present a variety of opportunities for cooperation between the communities, including community organizing, mutual support and political advocacy.

Asian Americans have impacted our Nation in several distinct ways: in science and technology; arts and media; and business and social work.

Approximately 1.1 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders own small businesses in the United States. Additionally, Asian Pacific Americans have served bravely in the United States Armed Forces, and more than 300,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are veterans.

The theme for this year's Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is "Dreams and Challenges of Asian Pacific Americans." Throughout the month of May, this theme serves as a reminder that while this community has made several strides, many Asian and Pacific Americans face economic and societal challenges.

Affordable health care and education are among those challenges that all Americans, including Asian Pacific Americans, face. It is estimated that more than 2 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders currently have no health insurance, a figure that is far too large.

We must focus on policies that will provide all Americans the opportunity to prosper in our great country.

Throughout the month of May, Mr. Speaker, I ask all Americans to join me in raising awareness of this growing community as we celebrate together Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BIGGERT addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30 SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again.

I would like to thank my colleagues, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and also my good friends from the great State of Massachusetts, Mr. BILL DELAHUNT. I am so glad Mr. DELAHUNT is here.

We were talking earlier. I had to chuckle there for a minute because Mr. DELAHUNT always takes the opportunity and the privilege to share with us the printed word, and it is good to have him here. Mr. RYAN will be joining us a little later, Mr. Speaker.

If I could just take a moment here, Mr. Speaker, to let the Members know that the great debate took place here on this floor, a number of amendments were proposed, to make sure that we pass a budget that is just and fair for every American. But I must bring to the Members' attention, because I think Members do not realize what is happening, or if they do realize what is happening, I want to make sure that it is in the RECORD that they know.

We talk about debt a lot in our 30 Something Working Group, and talking about debt and doing something about debt are two different things.

The Republican majority continues to spend in a record-breaking way that is bankrupting this country and changing the philosophy of this country, which is pay-as-you-go.

Democrats, we are the only party in this House that can say that we balanced the budget. We have actually done it. We have actually had surpluses as far as the eye can see.

Republicans can only talk about, well, we would like to cut it in half and we would like to cut it back a quarter or what have you; but I just want to make sure that folks understand that there was an article written on Tuesday of this week entitled, Another Possible Bump to the Debt Ceiling, \$2.7 trillion budget plan pending before the House would raise the Federal debt ceiling by nearly 10 trillion less than 2 months after the Congress last raised the Federal debt borrowing limit. The provision is buried on page 121 of a 151-page blueprint. It serves as the backdrop for congressional action this week.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, and I usually have my letters here from the Secretary of the Treasury, but I think it is important that the American people and the Members of this House understand that what they are doing to this country, record-breaking debt.

I just want to make sure before we start off, and then I am going to be kind of quiet here tonight because I know that we have a lot to share. It is almost too much to share, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to share this with the Members one more time.

We are talking about who are we borrowing from. We are borrowing from Japan at \$682.8 billion; China, \$249.8 billion; the UK, \$223.2 billion; the Caribbean, \$115.3 billion; Taiwan, \$71.3 bil-

lion; OPEC nations, including Saudi Arabia and a number of nations that we have issues with, \$67.8 billion; Germany, \$65.7 billion; Korea, \$66.5 billion; Canada, \$53.8 billion and climbing.

If we do not stop this Republican majority from continuing to raise this debt ceiling and burying it within the Federal budget on what they believe their Members have to vote for, and this budget vote has been postponed and postponed and postponed, not because, Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority did not have time to deal with it; they just did not want to do to their constituents what the majority wants them to do.

As long as we are here and we have breath in our bodies, we are going to share with the Members of this House that we will not allow this to be a "back room with the lights off in the middle of the night" proposition for the American people that they do not have any choices in, but the special interests do.

I just in closing, again, history making, this is not the KENDRICK MEEK report, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, BILL DELAHUNT or TIM RYAN report. This is facts, not fiction. The U.S. Department of the Treasury backs this up: \$1.01 trillion borrowed in 224 years, since 1776 to the year 2000, versus \$1.05 trillion that was borrowed from 2001 to 2005 and counting from the President and the Republican majority Congress.

We are saying that we want to pay as we go. We are saying that we want to make sure that we are fiscally responsible. And we are saying that we are not going to allow the Republican majority to be able to have these countries look at America in a different way than they were prior to this administration and prior to this Republican Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

It is so great to be here with my 30 Something colleagues once again; and just to take off from where you left off, we try to help illuminate things during our hours and underscore for the American people, Mr. Speaker, what is really going on inside this Chamber and inside this Capitol and the debt, the colossal debt, that we are literally caving in under.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just like that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Just like our poster here, the colossal debt that we are caving in under that Mr. MEEK just described.

Sometimes it is hard to get your arms around, or mind around, what 1 billion is. One billion is a very big number. So we took the time to analyze or break down for folks the things that are analogous to 1 billion, and let me just walk people through that, Mr. Speaker, and this might be helpful for you, Mr. Speaker, as well.

The question is, how much is \$1 billion really. Well, for example, 1 billion

hours ago, humans were making their first tools in the Stone Age. One billion seconds ago, it was 1975 and the last American troops had pulled out of Vietnam.

Gee, I guess we sort of wish we were 20 years in the future and we could be saying that about the troops in Iraq, but I digress.

One billion minutes ago, it was 104 A.D. and the Chinese had first invented paper, and \$1 billion ago in Republican terms, Mr. Speaker, that was only 3 hours and 32 minutes at the rate that our government spends money.

So when you talk about people who live paycheck to paycheck, people who are struggling to make ends meet, people who are desperately trying to not live off of their credit cards, it does not appear to matter to the Republican leadership here, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2030

My colleagues, it really is astonishing to me. I have only been here 14 months. Both of you are more senior than me, but I am really surprised that some people actually believe what the Republican leadership says when they say they are the party of less government and more fiscal responsibility. Is an \$8 trillion debt fiscally responsible? Is being in debt to OPEC responsible? I mean, where is the fiscal responsibility in that?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I can, I ran across a column in one of the publications that circulates throughout here on Capitol Hill. It was actually in the Roll Call newspaper. It was this past Monday when it was published.

The headline is entitled, "GOP Banking on Economy."

You know, it is no secret that a growing majority of the American people believe that the country is headed in the wrong direction. The last poll that I saw just recently exceeded 70 percent of the American people believe that the country is going in the wrong direction. I happen to share that particular view.

It seems to perplex some of our friends and colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle that while the economy in terms of macro statistics is growing, that they are receiving no political benefit. I noted that the House majority whip from Missouri, who happens to be a friend of mine and someone for whom I have great respect, had this to say, "I spend a lot of time wondering about this myself. Why is it that with this incredibly strong economy people do not embrace the economy with the same kind of confidence that everything indicates that they should." That is what the House majority whip ROY BLUNT said in an interview taped by C-SPAN this past weekend.

Let me offer my own explanation.

It is because the benefit of the booming economy is extremely limited. The vast majority of Americans are not benefiting from the economic growth

that is occurring in our country. I think that is reflected in what happened here today in terms of the debate about the new tax cuts that are being proposed, Mr. Speaker, by our Republican colleagues and friends.

Let me just cite some interesting statistics. If you earn between \$20,000 and \$30,000, the benefit that you will receive from the tax cut that applies to dividends and capital gains amounts to \$9 on the average. So as a result of today's work by this Bush Congress, if you earn between \$20,000 and \$30,000 you received a tax break of \$9.

If you earn between \$50,000 and \$75,000, you got a tax break of \$110. But, Mr. Speaker, if you earned more than \$1 million, you get a check from Uncle Sam as a tax refund of \$42,000. Let us just reflect on that for a moment. Who is benefiting from the policies of the Bush administration and the Bush administration Congress? Let me put this in other words, in different terms.

If you took what happened here today, what this Congress did today, 77 percent of American families, families now, had their taxes reduced by \$30. That is 77 percent of American families had their tax bill reduced by \$30 at the same time, Mr. RYAN, Mr. MEEK, Mr. Speaker, 0.02 percent of American families got a tax break of \$42,000.

So what is happening? What we are doing is we are creating an America that is beginning to look like a banana republic. It would appear that those that have and really have, not just have a lot but have a stupendous amount of wealth, are receiving a totally disproportionate share of the prosperity that the country seems to be enjoying. But 77 percent are getting \$30.

And to stop and think today, that tax cut, Mr. Speaker, amounted to \$70 billion. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, to give that 0.02 percent \$42,000, we are going to borrow, we are going to borrow that \$70 billion and we are going to borrow it from China, from OPEC, from Japan, from Korea, and from Canada.

We are going to borrow, and you know what, Mr. Speaker? We are going to add to that deficit, and that is why people who are Republicans and conservative Republicans, like our former colleague Pat Toomey, who is the President of the Club for Growth, is saying things like this in the Philadelphia Inquirer, "There is a very high level of frustration and disappointment among rank-and-file Republicans when they see a Republican-controlled Congress engaging in an obscene level of wasteful spending, and it is really coming home to roost."

Mr. MEEK of Florida. He says more, right?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes. That is not all he said, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this is Mr. Toomey, President of Club for Growth, a conservative advocacy group, who served in this Congress, Mr. Speaker, and this is what he is saying about the Republican Congress: "Republicans have abandoned

the principles of limited government and fiscal discipline that historically have united Republicans and energized the Republican base. Too many Republicans have gotten too comfortable in office."

That is what Pat Toomey, a former colleague, a member of this Congress a short time ago, is now saying about the Bush Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman and I agree with former Congressman Toomey. As you made the point about the wealthiest, the millionaires getting \$42,000 back and the missed priorities and the schoolteacher in Ohio who is making \$35,000 or \$40,000 and getting just a few dollars back, we are not saying that the wealthy person does not make a certain contribution to society because they do. Make profits and make money, we want you to. But there is just as much value to our society by the teacher.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We are saying let us be fair. Fairness here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And who actually needs the tax cut is that person who is a home health care aide, driving around, and the gas prices are high and everything else.

Mr. DELAHUNT talked about borrowing the money to do this and who we are borrowing it from. This is from 2001 to 2005, of the \$1.18 trillion in debt that the Bush presidency, the Bush House and Bush Senate racked up, \$1.16 trillion of the \$1.18 trillion came from foreign nations. We are not even borrowing the money from National Citibank or some bank in our own country, we are borrowing this money from the Chinese government or the Japanese government. That at the end of the day makes us weak.

I want to show one more chart here. This is the public debt held by China. It has quadrupled under Bush. It was \$62 billion in 2000, and it is \$257 billion in 2005.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I asked this today in a hearing in the International Relations Committee of Secretary Zoellick, and he indicated that now the debt is \$262 billion that is owed by the United States Government to the Chinese.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And so if you are sitting in a community in Ohio or in the industrial Midwest or in New England or somewhere across this country where the jobs you have are being lost to China, and then you know that your government at the same time is borrowing money from China, and the Chinese government is using that money to undermine American business in the United States of America and we continue to borrow it, and that is just in the past year or so, another \$5 billion has been borrowed from the Chinese. This is going on again and again.

The reason I bring this up is today we expanded this. We increased this even more. The \$42,000 that we are going to give a millionaire, we do not have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I think we are going to need to do these charts on dry erase boards from now on because it changes so rapidly and in the wrong direction that we are wasting public resources by printing them on unchangeable paper.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right. The money we pay in interest every year, \$230 billion a year, we pay in interest on the debt. That is interest on the debt. Compared to education and homeland security and veterans, this is the number we are paying on interest. This is reckless spending. This is a Congress that has run away with the checkbook. They are taking the country off a cliff financially without any regard for what this is costing future generations.

This group started to talk about optimism and what the future was going to look like.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but take this rubber stamp out. How did we get to where we are right now? It is not because of good policy making. It was not good policy making. It was because the Republican Congress, Mr. Speaker, has said, Mr. President, whatever you want, regardless of how bad it may make our fiscal situation in this country, we are willing to endorse it.

□ 2045

Today, in the Washington Post, folks want to talk about, if they think Mr. DELAHUNT just came up with these numbers, go on to Washingtonpost.com and they are right here, as it relates to what you will get if this budget passes the way the Republican administration wants it to pass.

And I think it is important that people realize that it is not the people that you send here to Washington, D.C., to represent you; it is the White House. Still, the Republican Congress is saying, even at low approval ratings, Mr. President, we are with you all the way. Whatever you want, we are willing to rubber-stamp it and we are willing to follow your lead, even if it is in the wrong direction, even if gas prices are higher now, even if we are borrowing record breaking, we are making history in borrowing \$1.05 trillion and counting from foreign nations, that is okay.

Even if it comes down to us defending a special oil deal, and then we had it turn around on you, but even at the beginning, allowing it to happen, we are with you all the way. Mr. President, whatever you say, we are going to rubber-stamp it.

So I think it is important, when you think of this Republican majority, Mr. Speaker, and I think when a number of our Members look in the mirror, especially on the other side of the aisle, a rubber stamp has to be somewhere in the background because that is what has happened, and that is what has got us in the situation that we are in now, and the American people see it, crystal clear.

This is not a Democratic issue. I am going to yield to you in one second.

This is not a Democratic issue. You can't blame the Democrats on what the present situation is.

Mr. Speaker, I always say that bipartisanship is based on the leadership of the institution. The leadership of the institution has not allowed bipartisanship in policy-making, in the financial situation, or even making sure that we just work in harmony here on the major issues.

That has not happened, and that is the reason why, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. RYAN, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the American people are hanging the failures of fiscal responsibility around the neck of the Republican majority and the White House, because they are in the same boat and they are rubber-stamping one another as they carry this country into further debt.

I yield.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You know, Mr. MEEK, I can understand why you would have trouble seeing past that giant rubber stamp. That is simply because this Chamber, through the Republican caucus and their Republican leadership, have been engulfed by the rubber stamp.

You know, had our bobble-head Republican not turned up missing, we would be able to use that as yet another example of why you continually have these policies that are put forward by the Republican leadership, as rubber-stamped by the Republican majority, because their heads only move in one direction. I guess there is no hinge in this direction, only, yes, absolutely, we are glad to do whatever you say, anything you want, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, it is just unbelievable. Fourteen months here and, "No, sorry, my conscience won't allow me to do that" is just not part of their vocabulary. And like I said, the joints just don't seem to work in this direction as they do for the Democrats.

Now, you know, what makes matters worse about all of the things that we have been talking about, about the debt and the deficit and the bobble-head, rubber-stamp Republican majority that we have here, is that there are consequences. This stuff matters. It matters in real people's lives.

And what the Republican leadership would have you believe, especially in recent days, their new thing now is that the economy is doing great. Now, obviously they are now trying to shift to a new frame and help everybody understand that in spite of an \$8 trillion deficit, in spite of the colossal debt that we are in to foreign countries across this globe, in spite of the fact that we have disproportionate trade deficits with many, many countries, Americans are doing great.

Really? Really?

Okay, well, let's examine that. I have here what the consequences actually are. We came up with a top ten list that describes the consequences of Republican economic policies. Since they raised the subject, they have brought it up recently and said, everything is

rosy, red rosy, and so let's just take a walk down memory lane here in terms of what is really going on in the United States of America.

Number 10. I am Danielle Letterman this evening. Number 10, we have a projected surplus of \$5.6 trillion that has vanished. It was replaced by a deficit in 2004 of \$413 billion, which is the largest in our Nation's history, and a deficit of \$318 billion in 2005, an almost \$3.5 trillion deficit over the next 10 years.

Number 9. The Bush administration is the administration with the greatest average annual decline in household income. We are talking real people here. Since Bush took office, household income has declined by \$1,670.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just to make a point. We heard a lot today, and I know I heard on the floor today a lot about how, as you said, the economy was doing great and how incomes were up. I think we have some facts that say otherwise.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We are talking third-party validators here. This is not stuff we are making up. This is not the Debbie Wasserman Schultz encyclopedia.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it is very important. I think that Number 9 explains the reason why the majority whip is perplexed, because what is clear to me is that the economy, if you were a student of economics and took a look at the macro view and saw growth, why the people aren't responding appropriately.

The reality is that the economy, Mr. Speaker, is superb. It is outstanding. It is phenomenal, if you are in the top 1 percent of the American population, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I would suggest that the President's approval rating wouldn't be at 31 or 32 percent if the economy was going great.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If people thought everything was as rosy as they would describe.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Exactly.

I yield for Number 8.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Number 8, 45.8 million Americans have no health insurance at all, 6 million more than in 2000.

Now, if things were getting better, that number would be, oh, I don't know, smaller, Mr. Speaker, not bigger, smaller. And you have, since then the cost of health insurance has risen nearly 59 percent. Yet workers' wages have only increased by 12 percent.

Now, we all do different things in our lives every day. We go to the supermarket. I am out on the soccer field or at dance class or on airplanes back and forth.

I am sitting next to a couple, a middle-aged couple, on the plane the other day from Tennessee. Not exactly a bastion of liberalism. They are from Tennessee. And do you know what they wanted to talk to me about when they found out I was a Member of Congress? What were we going to do about the cost of health care?

They owned a small business. They employed quite a number, 75 people. They employed 75 people and he literally said, the husband, the husband and wife team literally told me that within the next couple of years, if health care costs continue to go in this direction as they have since 2000, they would probably have to close their business. I mean, that is how bad it was getting.

So the garbage that the Republican leadership and this administration are trying to feed the American people, you know, that 31 percent, that number, I would expect would continue.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And it is a tough argument to make to say, when someone's struggling to say, no, no, you are really doing okay. Wait, no I am not. I have got to tell you it is kind of hard right now. No, I am telling you, you are really doing fine.

Mr. DELAHUNT. The economy grew.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I realize you are racking up credit card debt. I realize you can't afford to put gas in your tank.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And by the way, Mr. RYAN, it was interesting tonight on ABC News, for the 16th straight meeting of the Federal Reserve, interest rates were raised.

You know what that means, Mr. Speaker? That means that if you have an adjustable rate mortgage on your home, you are paying more money. You are paying more than that \$30 that this Republican Congress refunded to 77 percent of American families today. You are paying a lot more. And the reason is that because of the reckless spending that Pat Toomey refers to here, because of the reckless spending, you are jacking up interest rates, Mr. Speaker.

The majority party in this House, in this Senate, is complicit with the White House in terms of hidden costs like mortgage interest, like credit card interest. A while back it was 11 percent on your credit card. You know what it is today, Mr. Speaker? Today, the average interest rate on your credit card, it is 16 percent. You think that is a savings for the American people? You wonder what's wrong.

And Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ tells us that the median income for a family in this country has actually declined. And you think the economy is good?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, I guess they follow the philosophy and the idea that if you say it enough times, people will believe it. Maybe if you say it enough times, actually our governor, it must be in the genes, also subscribes to that theory in Florida, and really believes that if you say something enough times, then it will come true.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Number 7?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes, Number 7. Thirty-seven million Americans are living in poverty. We have a 12.7 percent poverty rate, which is on the rise, and 5.4 million people have fallen into poverty since the beginning

of the Bush administration, 5.4 million people.

You know, if they are going to talk about who is doing better, it is the wealthiest that are doing better. Their income is on the rise. Their life is getting better. Their lives are improving and their outlook is more rosy. The poor are getting poorer.

Number 6.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, please just don't say it is the poor. It is not the poor. It is the middle class.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are right.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is even the relatively affluent. They are not doing anywhere near as well as the top 1 percent.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, when I have to pay \$56 to fill up the gas tank in my minivan, believe me, you are right. It is not just the poor.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is hurting the middle class.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I would like to make a comment here, because that is, and I think that is the epitome of what this outfit is all about. It is always that, well, there is going to be a certain segment of our society that is poor. And you know what, it is tough to be in the middle class. And you know what, we can't come up with an alternative energy source. You know, well, conservation is a good personal virtue, but it is not a good, you know, public policy.

You know, this is not leadership. We should be trying to fix these problems, not just say, okay, we accept them. We accept 5.4 million people going into poverty in the last 5 years under the Bush administration. And when you look at who, you know, what? Mr. MEEK, I want you to look at this. This picture epitomizes, Mr. DELAHUNT, because the President is holding the hand of one of the most powerful Saudi leaders in the world.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The Saudi king.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The king. And I want this President to come hold the hand of somebody in my district. Go hold the hand of one of the 5.4 million people that just slipped into poverty.

This man doesn't need his hand held. But we have got a lot of people in the country that need a little help, and not a handout, a hand up, an opportunity to succeed.

I yield for Number 6.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, it takes \$53 to fill up an F-10 pickup truck. I mean, we have folks that are doing this on the credit card, Mr. Speaker, and guess what, after a couple of months of that, \$50-some-odd, some folks' average balance that they have is \$1,200 on a credit card. Soon they are not going to be able to do that, and they are going to be in the same situation this country is in, in debt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And they are paying 16 percent on that credit card bill.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And not be able to go on a hunting trip, not be able to go on a fishing trip, not be able to go on some kind of family vacation.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Not be able to get to work. How do people who are living paycheck to paycheck factor in \$53, \$56 into their weekly budget? And we have shown those charts, before too, and we can again. When your bottom line gas tank, filling-the-gas-tank cost goes from \$20-something to \$50-something every time you fill up, and people who have to drive any distance, I mean, we are from an urban community, a suburban community, as are both of you.

□ 2100

You just cannot zip around these communities in 2 seconds. You have to drive to get to most places. We are going to get to a point where people will lose their jobs because they will not be able to get to their jobs.

Mr. RYAN, let us just digress for a second and show what is going on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think this is very important when you ask why people are slipping into poverty.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. These are the consequences.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is exactly right. This is a consequence of some faulty leadership in the Nation's capital. Oil companies profits in 2002, \$34 billion. This is BP, Shell, Chevron, the whole bit. It gradually went up, in 2005, \$113 billion in profits.

Now, something is wrong with the structure of our society when the oil companies are reaping \$113 billion in profits and we have 5.4 million people slipping into poverty. We have college tuition costs doubling all over the country, Mr. DELAHUNT. We have a structure here that is just not working for the people any more.

Mr. DELAHUNT. You forgot one thing, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Is that in addition to the \$113 billion in profit, and three times, triple what it was 4 years ago? The American taxpayers, those that would be overhearing our conversation tonight, are subsidizing those same oil companies to the tune of about \$16.3 billion.

So let us be clear. Out of the 100, not only is this outfit here, these oil companies getting \$113 billion, our friend is saying, corporate welfare from this Republican-led institution, gave these guys \$16.3 billion of taxpayer money.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What do we get? Do you know what we get? We get a price of gasoline per gallon that cost \$1.45 4 years ago. We now can buy it for \$3.25. That is what we get.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, that is the reason why we know it made number 6 on this chart. We want to make sure that we know it went to number 5. I want to make sure we believe in third-party validators here.

I just pulled this out of my notebook here because I want to make sure while we are talking about this, Mr. Speaker,

Washington Post, November 16, 2005, page 1, White House documents showed that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President DICK CHENEY, Energy Task Force 2001, something long suspected by environmentalists but denied recently as of November, 2005.

Last week, industry officials testified before Congress. The document obtained this week by the Washington Post shows that officials from Exxon Mobil Corporation, Conoco, before the merger with Phillips, Shell Oil Company, and BP of America met in a White House complex with Cheney aides who were developing a national energy policy, parts of which became law, and parts which are still being debated.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There is no end in sight. No end in sight to the rising gas prices. What will happen with number 7, where we have a 12.7 percent poverty rate that is on the rise and 5.4 million more people who have fallen into poverty. That number is going to get bigger. It is costs like these that send people into poverty.

You have number 6 here that talks about the Consumer Confidence Board's index. Its expectation index is the lowest it has been in 3 years.

Number 5, Congressional Republicans defeated a Democratic amendment recently to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. If the minimum wage kept pace with inflation, it would be \$8.88 right now. It hasn't been increased since 1997. That is 9 years ago, 9 years?

I mean, if you are a person who is living on the minimum wage, struggling to pay, to fill your gas tank, struggling to put food on the table, you have no health insurance, do you really want the Bush administration and the Republican leadership to tell you how great the economy is? Do you believe them?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is an insult. The more I think about it, that is a real insult.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is a slap in the face, and, really, a bigger and bigger percentage of the population is being engulfed by the struggle just to make ends meet.

Let us go to number 4.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You know what, it would be nice to represent a district where the economy is going great, would it not? Yes, it is going great. Look around, everybody is having a nice time. That will be great. Fortunately, I think in most districts that is not the case.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Maybe they live in an alternative universe, bizarre world.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Maybe this is a supernatural thing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I know, maybe they watch Star Trek.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Maybe it is supernatural. That is what we all know.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Maybe it is.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think this is fascinating, as you go through this litany

of consequences of, you know, Bush, Republican, neoconservative economic policies.

I think what we see here, the cumulative effect in the aggregate of all of these policies is the erosion of the middle class in this country. Debbie, you are correct. More and more people are getting closer to falling into that poverty.

The middle class, if this reckless spending, policies that advantage only the extremely wealthy continue in this country, we won't have a middle class. We will look like some banana republic in Central America.

This is the reality that we face. I think we can all agree that without a healthy vibrant middle class our very democracy is at risk.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. How about the common good?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Oh, please.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. How about the common good? How about the good of everybody where everybody contributes and everybody benefits. The common good. Rising tide lifts all boats, Mr. DELAHUNT. Everybody benefits from our economic policy, not this stuff.

How is this good for society? The guy in the pickup truck is paying \$57 to fill up gas tanks and the oil companies are making \$113 billion in profits, 5.4 million are following into poverty, tuition costs triple. Health care is up how many percent above the rate of increase in wages?

All of these things say that this Republican Congress and Republican administration is about a very small group of people. All we are making the argument more here is we are America. We are a family.

Where is the American family, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ? Let us start worrying about all of us. Because if we lose a couple, it is bad for everybody.

I yield to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. RYAN, I think I have figured it out. You have broken the code. The Republicans are the party of the cavernous abyss. They don't mind sending people right off the cliff into it, whether it is expanding poverty, sinking job growth, increasing the number of uninsured by millions each year.

The party of the cavernous abyss is the party that created this Medicare prescription drug program with another cavernous abyss that senior citizens fall into just after they spend a little amount of money on their prescription drugs. So you have to ask where the American family is. They are engulfed by the Republican cavernous abyss.

Number 4, I think we are on now. Yes, number 4. There are now 1.3 million more unemployed private sector workers than there were in January of 2001, the beginning of the party of the cavernous abyss. The long-term unemployment rate, which is people who are unemployed for more than 26 weeks, has nearly doubled since that time.

This is the rosy economy that we are living in, Mr. MEEK. This is how great we are doing.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But the economy is growing, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the economy is growing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The economy is growing so well that we have number 3, in which the Bush administration, it has become clear, has the slowest job growth of any administration in over 70 years. Since January of 2001, 2.9 million manufacturing jobs have been lost. That is entire towns in Mr. RYAN's district.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But the economy is growing. But the economy has grown.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Rosy, rosy. Things are rosy, rosy. Number 2, since President Bush took office the economy that is rosy, rosy has posted only 15 months of job gains of 150,000 or more. That is since he took office, that is in 6 years. That is the number of jobs needed to keep up with the population growth. So we are not talking about anything to write home to talk about.

Finally, number 1 of the top 10 worst consequences of Republican economic policies, 7.2 million Americans remain unemployed today with an additional 4.2 million who want a job, but are not counted among the unemployed because they have been looking so long they get taken off the rolls. The economy is rosy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let us do better.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But the economy is growing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let us do better. Let us implement some of these ideas that we have. Let us implement some of this innovation agenda where we are going to have broadband in every household, Mr. DELAHUNT. That will create a whole new class of people that will understand how to benefit from the Internet.

Let's have the research and development tax credit that the Democrats have in our innovation agenda. Let's make sure we get the real security going so we can make sure that we have the proper energy process, the proper energy plan for the United States of America.

Why is it still going to be energy independent and the United States of America still gambling in this game that we have in the Middle East? It's a big game that we are losing. Everybody is losing. It leads to the war on terrorism. It leads to these tremendous profits at the cost of average people, Mr. DELAHUNT. It is polluting the environment.

We have all kinds of problems because we refuse to say, we want to be a leader in alternative energies in the world. Brazil is doing it, why can't we? Why is there a magnetic levitation train in Shanghai that goes 270 miles an hour and not in the United States, Mr. DELAHUNT?

Quite frankly, I think this President and this Congress has given our generation, the 30-something generation, a pretty raw deal. You know, you think

about it, we are going to have more debt. We are going to have a dirtier environment. We have got higher tuition costs. We have got more debt, higher credit card rates, higher interest rates, less control, because we borrowed so much money from all of these foreign countries. What legacy are you leaving to the next generation, which is what we originally started coming to this floor for?

It is terrible. That is poor leadership. I don't care if you are a Democrat or you are a Republican. That is poor leadership. You left the country worse off than you found it. That is not the American way. That is not the American dream. Give us a chance, Mr. Speaker. Put us in coach. I mean, God, we couldn't do any worse. We have ideas to unleash the potential of this country and move the country forward.

Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just have something to share, but I am willing to yield to my colleagues. Mr. DELAHUNT, I know that you had, you had your glasses out, I know that you wanted to share something with us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think just to underscore, Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here tonight is the overall Republican economic policy that favors the top 1 percent of the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It doesn't work.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think we have made our case. Can I just give you one more statistic?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You can do whatever you want.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Back in 1991.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 1991?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Give me just a minute. Back in 1991, the top 1 percent of the American people, the population, top 1 percent, owned 38 percent of the corporate wealth in this country. One percent in 1991 owned 38 percent of the corporate wealth in this country.

□ 2115

Today, today, the top 1 percent of the American population in terms of wealth owns 58 percent of the corporate wealth.

Let me suggest it is more than just an economic policy that is creating this economic divide in this country that is truly making us a class society that is dangerous for democracy. It is more than that. It has, I would submit, no moral underpinning.

There is no basis in morality for this level of disparity of wealth and income among Americans. This is economic Darwinism. This is, as you said so eloquently, Mr. RYAN, not what America is about. This doesn't reflect the social compact that we all adhere to as Americans, where we encourage individual initiative, but at the same time, recognize mutual responsibilities and a willingness to share.

This is not sharing. This is just, I don't want to use the word "immoral," but it doesn't have, I would suggest, the kind of moral underpinning that reflects American values.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I would like to make a point, because as the oil companies reap these profits, and again I am not saying for you not to make profits, but not at the expense of every-one else in society.

So I want to make this point: The oil companies benefit a great deal from the public, from what the taxpayers support, A, point number one, the \$16.3 billion in corporate welfare that they are getting from the public tax dollars that is going to them. So they can't say they don't benefit from the public.

But their product is sold on roads that are funded by the taxpayer. Those roads are protected by the taxpayer, paved by the taxpayer, secured by the taxpayer. The ports in which the oil comes in and out of our country, all funded by the taxpayers. The Coast Guard, by the taxpayers. The military, the over \$400 billion budget that we have here that we spend on our military that goes to protect the transportation lines and the oceans, and as the ships start distributing this all over the world, that is protected by the taxpayer.

So all we are arguing here, Mr. Speaker, is that the taxpayer has an interest; and when this company and this certain industry benefits so much from the public tax dollars, they should be responsive to the public in these instances.

I would be happy to yield to any one of you to wrap up this brilliant discussion. I am going to yield to Debbie.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

The only thing I want to add to tie a ribbon on this whole discussion is that what we have all noticed, whether we are in our districts with our constituents or talking to people across the country, when we interact with them, is that people have reached the breaking point. They don't buy it. They don't buy the garbage that is being fed to them by this administration that the economy is rosy, that everything is going well, that everything is hunky-dory.

They are falling off the cliff into the Republican cavernous abyss, and they are tired of it, and they want to have the Democrats or someone other than the people who are taking them in this direction that they no longer are willing to go, to fix it. Even their former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said that they are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Newt Gingrich, former Republican Speaker of this House.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is time to move this country in a new direction and restore America's confidence in their government. We know we have a plan that we can do that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as we go through this tonight, the 30 Something's two key third-party validators are the former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and former

Congressman Pat Toomey, now president of the Club for Growth, both saying that there is out-of-control spending, out-of-control government, dysfunctional, and the American people know that.

Any Members who would like to come to our Web site, www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something, www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Also, Mr. RYAN, I want to share with the Members, Mr. Speaker, that all of the charts tonight will be on that Web site, on the 30 Something front page.

Also, I would like to share with the Members that Ranking Member GEORGE MILLER and also U.S. Senator DICK DURBIN put forth a proposal to reverse the raid on student loans. Earlier this year, as you know, \$12 billion was cut out of the Federal student loan program in order to help finance tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

This proposal will roll that back and cut in half interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. And it has to be done sooner rather than later. If not, it will be a financial burden after July 1 for so many kids that want to go to college. They will actually qualify, but kids will be priced out and not be able to make it to college.

Of course, this wouldn't be a discussion if the Democrats were in control, but we hope that we can work in a bipartisan way to change that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who joined us here tonight on the floor and thank the Democratic leadership for the hour.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has shown lenience toward the rather informal pattern by which Members have been claiming and yielding and reclaiming the time controlled by the gentleman from Florida. But Members should bear in mind that the Official Reports of Debate cannot be expected to transcribe two Members simultaneously.

Members should not participate in debate by interjection and should not expect to have the reporter transcribe remarks that are uttered when not properly under recognition.

THE CONTINUED MISDIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be here in the House tonight and be joined by some of our colleagues in the freshman Democratic class that was elected in 2004.

I believe my colleague, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida, is going to stay on and talk with us a little bit tonight, and we

expect to be joined by some other of our colleagues to talk about the continued direction of our country and, in particular, this budget and tax plan that has been put before this Congress by President Bush and congressional Republicans.

I really want to rise and express my deep, deep concern about this budget. The cuts in programs across the board, no other word can be given, but they are staggering. This budget does not provide for the average American. It continues to line the pockets of the wealthiest Americans.

Like so many of the President's priorities, this budget is a misplaced opportunity to actually effect positive change for our citizens. I would like to draw particular attention to the energy provisions in this budget.

Last week, the AP reported that the average cost of a gallon of regular, unleaded gasoline was \$2.92, up 35 cents from just a month ago. Moreover, U.S. drivers are now paying about 14 percent more to fill their tanks than just 1 year ago. Recent polls show that over 65 percent of Americans are suffering from financial hardship due to rising gas prices. But we don't need a poll to tell us that when we fill our tanks.

DEBBIE, you told us earlier, like many of us, we go to fill up our tank of gas, and it is nothing to pay \$50 or more to fill our tank of gas, just to do our routine chores and drive around town where we live.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And the astronomical increase we have had in gas prices, which affects everyday Americans every single day, has just been unbelievable.

Actually, Mr. CARNAHAN, we have a chart that illustrates those drastic increases, that is being brought over right now, that I think would be helpful; because I am a visual person, and graphically depicting some of these significant problems is really helpful.

Mr. CARNAHAN. I have to add, by the way, you have great graphs.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. CARNAHAN. And I loved your top ten.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We have good graph-makers among our staff.

You talk about summer gas prices. Just look at the difference over the years since the Republicans have been in charge.

In 2002, Mr. CARNAHAN, the average price of a gallon of gas was \$1.39; that was the summer of 2002. Then you go to the summer of 2003, it was \$1.57. 2004, \$1.90. Move over to the summer of just last year, \$2.37. And then this April, just last month, we hit \$2.91. Now, most of us in the last several weeks have all paid over \$3 in most communities across America.

So this is the reality of the rosy Republican economy that they have been describing and painting for us over the last several days.

Mr. CARNAHAN. It certainly is. And we have all had the stark awakening as we fill our tanks each week.